



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

**For Immediate Release:**

Contact: T. Wayne Kirwan, 410-313-2108  
[wkirwan@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:wkirwan@howardcountymd.gov)

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### **Columbia Man Sentenced to Six Years in Prison for 2017 Attempted Rape**

A 21-year-old Columbia man convicted of a late-night, attempted second-degree rape has been sentenced to six years in prison and faces deportation to his native El Salvador. Jonathan Mauric Tejada-Flores, of the 5200 block of Turnabout Lane, was sentenced by Howard County Circuit Court Judge Richard S. Bernhardt this morning.

Last January, Tejada-Flores entered an Alford plea to the June 4, 2017 sexual assault of an 18-year-old woman who was walking along a footpath close to the intersection of Little Patuxent Parkway and Governor Warfield Parkway in Columbia's Town Center. The woman fought back, chasing and punching her assailant while marching him to The Gramercy at Town Center apartments where she knocked on several doors seeking help. Tejada-Flores regained the upper hand after brandishing a knife and forcing the woman back to the pathway where he was taken into custody by police.

During the sentencing hearing, Assistant States Attorney Jennifer Ritter told the court, "This is every woman's worst nightmare," and criticized a recommendation by the Maryland Department of Parole and Probation that Tejada-Flores be sentenced to 12 months of active incarceration. "Quite frankly, I find it absurd...it's mind-boggling," she stated.

Tejada-Flores' defense attorney argued that the offense was "out of character for him" and that it was fueled by alcohol along with the use of a controlled dangerous substance. The young man's mother pleaded with the judge to give her son a second chance, echoing a pre-sentence investigation that he had no prior criminal record. Jonathan Tejada-Flores declined to speak at his sentencing hearing.

Judge Bernhardt called the assault "a horrifying crime" and referred to facts presented at the plea hearing revealing that Tejada-Flores confronted police and resisted arrest. He sentenced him to 15 years in prison, suspending all but six years. He pointed out that if Tejada-Flores is not deported as a result of an Immigrations and Customs Enforcement detainer, then upon his release he must serve five years of supervised probation.